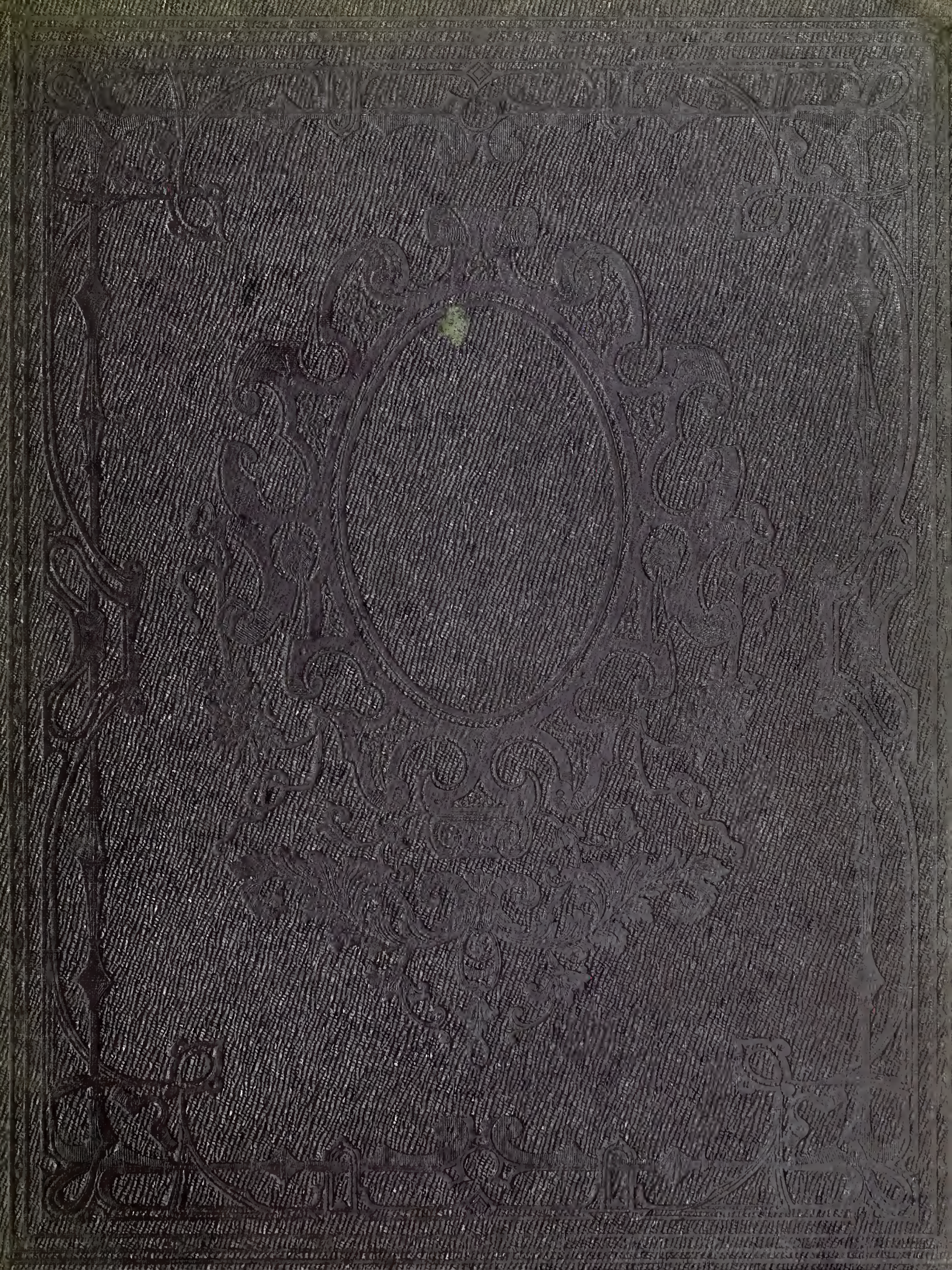
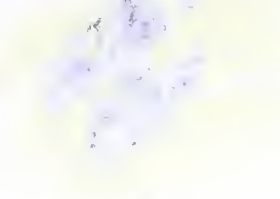








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PRACTICAL HINTS
ON
PORTRAIT PAINTING:

Illustrated by Examples

FROM THE WORKS OF VANDYKE AND OTHER MASTERS.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

THIS work on PORTRAIT PAINTING originated in an Essay on the beauty and character of the human countenance, from which, in the body of the present treatise, many of the thoughts and arrangements are taken and engrafted. I found, however, that the original work, from being long under my hand, had grown to too great an extent for a single volume, therefore determined to abridge it, and confine my labours in the present instance to the single subject of Portrait Painting—intending to commence with examples from the works of Raffaele and Titian; but, on reflection, decided upon taking the illustrations from artists more coeval with our own times and present practice—recollecting an observation of Sir Joshua Reynolds, “that, all things considered, Vandyke must be acknowledged the greatest portrait painter that ever existed.”

No branch of the fine arts has met with greater encouragement in England than portrait painting, nor has portraiture flourished to the same extent in any other country. Much of the taste now existing for this species of painting has, no doubt, arisen from Vandyke’s residence amongst us; for although the pictures of Holbein possess a certain intrinsic value, from their careful resemblance to the originals, yet as works embodying the pictorial qualities of chiaroscuro and colour, they have feeble pretensions to be considered as compositions upon which the harmonious prin-

ciples of portrait beauty can be based. To Vandyke alone we are therefore indebted for the power of extending this arrangement through a variety of changes in the character and costume of the people of Great Britain. For a time it was continued by the servile imitations of Lely and Kneller; but the theory not being understood, it gradually sunk and died away into the puerile and vulgar representations of Jervas and Hudson. The inquiring mind of Reynolds searched into the principles which regulate pictorial beauty, with effective light and shade, and not only revived the expiring embers, but added a glow of rich colour unknown in England before his time.

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PORTRAIT PAINTING.

THE leading characteristic of Portrait Painting is certainly the likeness: the historical painter gives the general character of man—the portrait painter the individual character; but, as every man is more or less defective, according as men depart from the general standard, this general standard ought to be defined, that we may perceive at a glance where the variations lie, and treat them accordingly, not by obliterating such departure, but by modifying it, and thus ennobling the character by refining both on the form and colour. Studying antique statues¹ enables us to accomplish the one; and examining carefully the best pictures of the great colourists serves as a guide in directing us towards a knowledge of the other. He who attempts either without the requisite study is like one who goes into a foreign country without a chart. Alexander would never sit for his portrait to any one but Apelles, who knew how to ennoble the likeness; whilst Cromwell desired Sir Peter Lely to represent all his warts and excrescences. A very little practice will soon convince an artist that most of his sitters will be actuated by the feelings of Alexander rather than by those of the stern Protector of the Commonwealth.

Sir David Wilkie, in his remarks upon portrait painting, speaking of the deviations often necessary for an artist to make, says—“In the example of the human head, without attempting to generalise, so far as to

make it the beau ideal of the class to which it belongs, there is yet in every head certain untoward shapes, spaces too vacant or too much divided, or certain lines which, for harmonious arrangement, require to be assimilated in their direction, which the practice of every draughtsman will at once correct; and this sort of treatment or accommodation is common to all heads, more or less, of the most perfect kind which nature can supply. In reflecting on individual character, Sir Thomas Lawrence used to say, that even in the majestic head of Mrs. Siddons there were parts and forms which did not appear to belong to Mrs. Siddons, and should therefore be omitted in her portrait. To every head where character as well as resemblance is required, the same remark will apply. Not only may accidents be softened down, or left out, but a due distinction should be made between what is permanent and fixed, and parts liable to continual alteration and change. The eyes, the nose, the mouth, require to be given with a force due to their pre-eminence; while the dimples on the cheek of youth and the wrinkles on the brow of age should not be given with the force of life, but with such delicacy as fleeting and evanescent nature requires. The question, however, will be, how far this deviation from actual appearances may be allowed; for it may be said, can anything be a better representation of a man than the transcript of himself, or can it be a better likeness by being unlike the man? In regard to actual resemblance, there are those whom nothing will satisfy but a real, striking, startling likeness—a something which a child might not only know, but mistake for the reality. Those who demand such proof from art may find it in the merest daub, in the harshest caricature, but will look for it in vain in the finest pictures.” Now, although this extract contains much correct reasoning, I cannot refrain from putting the student on his guard, lest he should generalise too much, and leave out those connecting links in the features on which expression so much depends, and which even a flattering likeness mainly rests upon. In continuation, Wilkie remarks—“Of all judges, the most difficult to satisfy, and whose opinion there seems the least reason to doubt or question, are the family and the

relatives of the person whose portrait has been painted. They, more than all others, must know the original best; and, knowing this, it would seem vain to doubt but that they must distinguish what is like or unlike. It is indeed not the knowledge, but the taste of such persons that should make us hesitate to alter what they say should be altered, and obey their judgment to the full in this matter." And here it may be safely noticed, that the moment the artist gives up the guidance of his pencil to another, he not only incurs the risk of spoiling his picture as a work of value, but runs a great chance of destroying the resemblance. "As a work of art must every portrait be tried: without such merit it loses not merely a part of its fancied beauty and attraction, but what, in one sense, is of more consequence, it loses its utility, it loses all that it should represent to future times, and should save it too from early neglect and oblivion." "Its value as a work of art will preserve the resemblance of the homeliest woman and the poorest individual, while any trace of the most famous hero, the most beautiful woman, and the most august sovereign, will be swept by time from the memory of man, if the age in which they flourished fails to have kept a portrait of them sufficiently valuable to be worth preserving." It was asked by a lady how it was that the portraits of celebrated people painted by the Jervases, Hudsons, and others, were no longer to be seen. Sir Joshua Reynolds replied, "Because, madam, they are all up in the garrets."

That likeness does not depend upon detail may be proved by our instant recognition of any one of our friends, even across the street, where scarcely a feature can be defined. Likeness will be found to lie more in the general form, and the masses of dark and half-tints: and the eye taking in the whole figure at the same time assists the imagination in completing the resemblance. This is one great reason that ought to make us cautious in losing the peculiarity of the outward form, both in the head and contour of the figure.

The extreme darks, and their exact distance from each other, are greatly conducive to likeness, as also marking the points where high lights fall, par-

ticularly on the forehead, nose, and cheekbone. I have seen many first sittings where these were happily put in, more like than when the picture was finished. In finishing, the essential parts too often lose their ascendancy, and the introduction of the detail is given with too great severity; hence the breadth is destroyed, and the whole being in this way too much defined, the countenance loses the life-like and moving character of nature. This is frequently the cause why a sketch captivates more than the most laboured work: rapidity of handling and looseness of touch—such as we see in the pictures of Rubens, where the lines and colours flow into each other—contribute to this attractive quality. The small pictures by Vandyke possess this property also in a high degree. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that expression contributes more than any other means to give animation and an attractive character to the likeness, whether manly dignity or feminine softness; without expression, the features, though quite correct and carefully rendered, will be found lifeless and fixed. This one great charm in portrait painting can be only caught at a moment when the sitter is off his guard, or not fatigued and weary from keeping the head in one position. The seat of sweet, soft, feminine character lies in the outer corner of the eyes, especially the lower eyelid, and the corners of the mouth: this the painter should catch, towards completion, with a few delicate touches. Dignity lies in the under-lip and chin, and the upper orbit of the eye and forehead: to give the one without a simper, and the other without a frown, requires the nicest feeling of the artist.

Another necessary adjunct to a refined likeness is a truth in the colour, having the tone of flesh, and all its suppleness of appearance. In variety of tint, it must possess a uniformity, and in a mixture of soft and sharp touches, a proper balance. This truth in the colour is, perhaps, the most difficult part of the work to achieve, and can only be acquired by a keen observation of the best pictures, and an eye and hand educated by much practice. The later works of Titian, Rubens, and Velasquez, and the earlier works of Vandyke, are filled with this fascinating property; nor should the

portraits of Rembrandt be omitted, for whatever may be defective in form or expression, the flesh is of the most natural tone, possessing all the character of real life.

Without going into the history of portrait painting, it may be of service, both to the painter and his sitters, to give a short sketch of what has been achieved by the founders of this department of the art, that when we investigate the subject more practically, the principles may become more evident. To Titian, the father of portrait painting, we must look for most of those qualities which ennoble and dignify the subject—simple and unaffected air of the figure, grandeur in the contour, and the greatest breadth both in the light and shade, and colour. Opie, in his lecture on Colouring, speaking of Titian, says, “ Like Michael Angelo in design, Titian in colouring may be regarded as the father of modern art. He first discovered and unfolded all its charms, saw the true end of imitation, showed what to aim at and where to stop, and *united breadth and softness to the proper degree of finishing*. He first dared its depths, contrasted all its oppositions, and taught colour to glow and palpitate with all the warmth and *tenderness of real life*. Free from tiresome detail or disgusting minutiae, he rendered the roses and lilies of youth the more ensanguined brown of manhood, and the pallid coldness of age with truth and precision; and to every material object, hard or soft, rough or smooth, bright or obscure, opaque or transparent, his pencil imparted its true quality and appearance to the eye, with all the force and harmony of light, shade, middle-tint, and reflection, by which he so relieved, rounded, and connected the whole, that we are almost irresistibly tempted to apply the test of another sense, and exclaim—

“ Art thou not, pleasing vision !
Sensible to feeling as to sight ?”

At an early period he mounted the throne of portrait painting, where, in the opinion of many, he still keeps his seat unshaken, notwithstanding the violent attacks made on him at different periods by Vandyke, Rembrandt, and Reynolds. He combines resemblance with dignity, *costume* with taste,

and art with *simplicity*, and equally delights the physiognomist, the artist, the antiquary, and the connoisseur.

“To him we are in some measure indebted for the daring vivacity of Tintoretto, the freshness of Veronese, the strength of Carracci, the glowing splendour of Rubens, the truth of Rembrandt, and the taste of Vandyke. Justly, therefore, was it said of him by Michael Angelo, that had he been a correct designer he would have been the first painter that ever lived. Titian, like his contemporaries, began his career by merely copying nature as she happened to present herself, without choice or selection, and laboured for a time in the labyrinth of littleness, meanness, and deformity; but a hint from Giorgione soon taught him that taste was as requisite as industry; that labour might be misapplied, and truth itself become uninteresting, unnatural, and disgusting; that hairs, pores, pimples, warts, stains, freckles, and all the train of nauseous minutiae on which inferior artists waste their puny powers, are incompatible with the true end of imitation; that the detail must be sunk in the essential and predominant qualities of bodies; and that the business of painting, like that of poetry, is not to give a feeble catalogue of particulars, but a characteristic, comprehensive, and animated impression of the whole.”

This extract certainly contains the true philosophy of the art, and ought to be kept constantly in mind; nevertheless, it is indispensable for an artist to go through a certain course of correct imitation, that he may acquire a correctness of eye, and a clear knowledge of the natural properties of bodies; and notwithstanding the existence of Titian's works as examples, all great portrait painters and colourists exhibit in their earlier pictures a severity and dryness; and it is from this course of preparatory study we are indebted to the force and freedom in the later works of Rubens and Velasquez. Another quality to which portraiture is indebted for its ennobling quality — is sentiment, and the power of giving the inward thoughts of the person represented—a representation of the mind: this it is that places the artist in the ranks of the historical painter.

Fuseli, whilst placing the painter of portraits in a lower grade than the painter of negative subjects, guards himself from including portraiture in its higher achievements. In his lecture on Invention, he observes, "The next place to representation of pomp among negative subjects, but far below, we assign to portrait. Not that characteristic portrait by which Silanion, in the face of Apollodorus, personified habitual indignation; Apelles, in Alexander, superhuman ambition; Raphael, in Julio II., pontifical firmness; Titian, in Paul III., testy age with priestly subtilty; and in Machiavelli and Cæsar Borgia, the wily features of conspiracy and treason. Not that portrait by which Rubens contrasted the physiognomy of philosophic and classic acuteness with that of genius, in the conversation piece of Grotius, Mursius and himself. Not the nice and delicate discriminations of Vandyke, nor that power which, in our days, substantiated humour in Sterne, comedy in Garrick, and mental and corporeal strife, to use his own words, in Samuel Johnson. On that broad basis portrait takes its exalted place between History and the Drama. The portrait I mean is common—one as widely spread as confined in its principle; the remembrancer of insignificance; mere human resemblance in attitude without action, features without meaning, dress without drapery, and situation without propriety. The aim of the artist and the sitter's wish are confined to *external likeness*; that deeper, nobler aim—the personification of character—is neither required, nor, if obtained, recognised. The better artist condemned to this task can here only distinguish himself from his duller brethren by execution—by invoking the assistance of background, chiaroscuro, and picturesque effects, and leaves us, whilst we lament the misapplication, with a strong impression of his power: *him* we see not; the insignificant individual that usurps the centre one we never saw—care not if we never see; and if we do, remember not, for his head can personify nothing but his opulence or his pretence: it is furniture."

These are strong remarks, and severe criticism, but we must make some allowance for the chagrin of an historical painter, such as Fuseli, when the

whole tide of patronage had set in, carrying portrait painting triumphantly over every other branch of the art. We hear remarks similar made every year of our exhibitions by the public at large, who cry out against the multitude of portraits that create no interest to the investigation of pictures on the Academy walls. The question is, how is this state of things to be ameliorated? People of notoriety spring up but seldom; and it ought to be remembered, as has been said before, that painting, once the privileged right of sovereigns and men of eminence, from the spread of wealth in this country, has been called into request by every one who can afford to pay for his portrait. To prevent such works finding their way up into the garret, requires an artist of sufficient genius to give them a money value, or by improving upon the original, give his descendants a pride in preserving the copy. It is said by many that we "are fallen on evil times," when even Vandyke could make nothing of the scanty costume; but the human head is still left in all its character, and female loveliness yields nothing to the beauty of her ancestors. Reynolds had to struggle with the most untoward forms in the head-dresses of his ladies, yet he had the talent to conquer the most towering bulwarks of powder and pomatum. Many artists paint to please their sitters or their relations, and give up the guidance of the palette out of their own hands. We must, however, wait for the reflux of the tide of taste, and in the meantime persevere, that we may not lose what has been gained for us by way of examples. We have seen the gradual declension of the arts from the time of Vandyke to the appearance of Reynolds. Do not let us witness the same declension from his time to the same extent. Every student ought to endeavour, by his study and perseverance, to keep from the chance of decay the branch of art to which he is devoted.

Barry, in his lecture upon colour, pays a high tribute to the talent of Reynolds, who raised the art out of the state of imbecility into which it had declined in England. He says—"A just attention to the admirable principles of chiaroscuro and colouring discoverable in the fine works of Titian,

Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyke, must more than anything lead us to reflect upon the great loss this Academy has sustained by the death of its illustrious president. In this very important part of the art, Sir Joshua was singularly excellent, and we might call to our recollection many of his works which have been exhibited on these walls, and which may be ranked with the finest examples of colouring and chiaroscuro. For a great part of his life he was continually employed in painting portraits, undoubtedly because there was no demand in the country for anything else, as the public taste had been formed to this by the long line of Hudsons, Highmores, Jervases, and Knellers who had preceded him, and whose works sufficiently testify from what a wretched state Sir Joshua raised this branch of the art, and how vigorous, graceful, and interesting it became by the masterly way in which he treated it. In many of Titian's portraits the head and hands are mere staring lightish spots, unconnected with either the drapery or background, which are sometimes too dark, and mere obscure nothings; and in Lely, and even Vandyke, we sometimes meet with the other extremity, of too little solidity, too much flickering and washiness. Sir Joshua's object appears to have been to obtain the vigour and solidity of the one, and the bustle and spirit of the other, without the excesses of either; and in by far the greatest number of his portraits he has admirably succeeded.

“His portrait of Mrs. Siddons is, both for the ideal and executive, the finest picture of the kind, perhaps, in the world. Indeed, it is something more than a portrait, and may serve to give an excellent idea of what an enthusiastic mind is apt to conceive of those pictures of confined history, for which Apelles was so celebrated by the ancient writers. But this picture of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse was painted not long since, when much of his attention had been turned to history. And it is highly probable that the picture of Lord Heathfield, the glorious defender of Gibraltar, would have been of equal importance, had it been a whole length; but even as it is there is great animation and spirit, happily adapted to the indications of the tremendous scene around him, and to the admirable

circumstance of the key of the fortress firmly grasped in his hands, than which imagination cannot conceive anything more ingenious and heroically characteristic."

In Barry's enthusiasm and anxiety to elevate Reynolds, he depreciates the backgrounds of Titian and Vandyke. The backgrounds of Vandyke are never washy; on the contrary, his figure is frequently too much lost in the ground; and when the hands of Titian's portraits would have interfered with the head, he generally covers them with gloves of a low tone—as is often the case with Velasquez, especially in his out-door portraits. Rembrandt seems to have been the model Sir Joshua took for his rich backgrounds, and also the tone of colour, and perhaps without his being aware of the great impression the works of Velasquez must have made upon him. Let me add that the works of Velasquez seem more congenial to the English taste than even Vandyke's, possessing more firmness and freshness.

Wilkie, in a letter to Sir Thomas Lawrence, from Madrid, writes—"These two great painters (*viz.*, Murillo and Velasquez) are remarkable for having lived in the same time, in the same school, painted from the same people, and yet to have formed two styles so different and opposite, that the most unlearned can scarcely mistake them—Murillo being all softness, while Velasquez is all sparkle and vivacity. To our English tastes it is unnecessary to advocate the style of Velasquez. I know not if the remark be new, but we appear as if identified with him; and while I am in the two galleries at the museum, half filled with his works, I can almost fancy myself among English pictures. Sir Joshua, Romney, and Raeburn, whether from imitation or instinct, seem powerfully imbued with his style; and some of our own time, even to our landscape painters, seem to possess the same affinity. Nothing can be more captivating than the examples of his manner of painting here. The portraits, equestrian and otherwise, of Philip the Third and Fifth, the Duke d'Olivarez, and the little infante Balthasar, with various portraits of children, decked out in the most fanciful and grotesque manner, are of the happiest effect; and such is his taste for

the varieties of character, that there are here six portraits of dwarfs painted as if they were his most favourite subjects." Also, in his journal at Madrid, Sir David Wilkie mentions Velasquez, and calls him "Teniers on a large scale." His handling is of the most sparkling kind, owing much of its dazzling effect *to the flatness of the ground it is placed upon.*

The picture by Velasquez of children in grotesque dresses in his painting-room is a surprising piece of handling. Still Velasquez would gain, and indeed does gain, when he glazes his pictures. He makes no use of his ground; lights and shadows are opaque—chilliness and blackness are sometimes the result, and often a cold blue or green prevails, requiring all his brilliancy of touch and truth of effect to make tolerable. Velasquez, however, may be said to be the origin of what is now doing in England. His feeling has been caught almost without seeing his works, which seem to anticipate much that Reynolds, Romney, Raeburn, Jackson, and even Sir Thomas Lawrence have since accomplished. Perhaps he does at once, what others do by repeated touches. It may be truly said, that "whenever Velasquez is admired, the paintings of England must be acknowledged and admired with him."

While I am on the subject of Velasquez, I must add another extract from Wilkie's letters; it is to the late Alexander Nasmyth, who was the father of the present school of landscape painting in Scotland, and intimately acquainted with Raeburn and his works: it is dated from Seville. He says:

"It is impossible to describe to you the impression Velasquez, here in the ascendant, makes upon the eye of the artist, by the boldness and dexterity of his pencil. To the British artist he is more captivating than to any other, for it is he we must try to follow. From Reynolds to the present time, the principles of Velasquez have, unconsciously perhaps, been the leading-star of our schools. My friends in London have ever been proud of the sympathy which exists between their works and those of this truly philosophical Spanish painter. I have also remarked, that our departed friend Raeburn was strongly possessed with this spirit, which, con-

sidering how rare the works of Velasquez are, looks like inspiration. There are some heads of his in Madrid, which, were they in Edinburgh, would be thought to be by Raeburn; and I have seen a portrait of Lord Glenlee, I think by Raeburn, which would, in Madrid, be thought a near approach to Velasquez."

I cannot refrain from adding my testimony to the truth of this observation; for, some time since, in company with my late friend, Mr. William Simson, of Edinburgh, on viewing a picture by Velasquez, a whole-length of Philip the Fourth, at Messrs. Woodburns', now in the collection of the Duke of Hamilton, at Hamilton Palace, we both simultaneously cried out, "Raeburn!" The dress is of a dull colour, with small openings all over; one glove is held in the hand, the other on, of a dull colour; the stockings are white and the shoes dark, on a light deal floor, such as we see often rendered with the same simplicity and force in the pictures of Teniers, whose works he admired, and of whose manner he made many pasticios. The breadth, the unaffected look of nature, and the broad handling, especially in the dress, are all characteristic of Raeburn's manner.

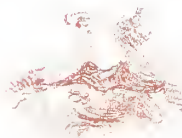
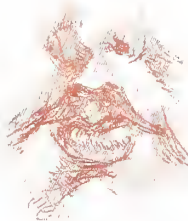
As I shall have occasion frequently to recur to the peculiarities of Velasquez and Vandyke, I must leave, for the present, this general treatment of the subject; yet, as it is my intention to give the principal examples from the heads and full-length portraits of Vandyke, it will be necessary here to afford a slight insight into his principles and practice. "Happily (as Barry remarks), the works of Vandyke are not scarce in this country, and in them you will see admirable examples of what has been urged respecting the beautiful arrangement of light and colours united to all the graces of intelligent, masterly execution; and his style is much more correct and beautiful than that of Rubens. But perhaps it may be necessary to remind you that the works of this great man consist of portraits, where he was not at liberty to avail himself, in any considerable degree, of the opposition of shadow (particularly on the flesh); the vigour of his effects was necessarily brought about by the mere chiaroscuro, or opposition of the several colours

proper to his object, and to the relatives which accompanied it. The observations, therefore, which these works afford upon the higher order of tints, and upon those in shadow and half light, will necessarily be too contracted to go all the length which your studies may require, as I do not know that we are in possession of any of the few historical compositions which he painted at his outset of life, before he was much engaged in portraits; but whether his subjects be extensive or contracted, they exhibit such excellent principles of art—the tints of his carnations have such verity in themselves, and such value from the hues which are so judiciously associated with them in the *draperies* and *background*, and the exquisite execution or conduct of his pencil is so very compatible with the most enlarged and consummate style of design and composition, that I know of no single model upon which your attention might be more properly engaged.” I shall only add a few remarks confirmatory of the correctness of Barry’s opinion.

While writing this part of the work, I went to the Duke of Buccleuch’s, at Montagu House, to examine the rich collection of small studies by Vandyke; in which his manner of conducting the union between the figure and background is rendered so remarkable by comparing the various positions in which the several heads are placed. The result of my observations I will give in a future portion of the work, when treating of the several parts more practically; here, however, I will insert a memorandum I made at the time. “The union of the figure with the background seems always to have been a principle with Vandyke, not only with regard to the light and shade, but also to the colour; the shapes of his lights are extended or doubled, and, repeated by means of the openings into the sky, or of a curtain, are coming in contact so as to extend them and break down their force. In his portrait of the Duke of Hamilton, in this collection, the strong lights on the dark armour are repeated in the sky, which is hemmed in and formed into shapes by means of the edge of a rock and dark stems of trees.” In the same room is another whole-length of Lord Holland, whose light slashed sleeve and doublet are extended into the sky and light column near which he stands.

Another excellent example of the union of the colour with the background is in a portrait of the Duke of Richmond and Lennox. He is dressed in deep black, with a quantity of light-brown hair; this colour is spread on a curtain behind him, which is cut into shapes by means of dark damask flowering, thereby extending the dark of the figure, and presenting the appearance of its being inlaid. This mode of repeating the colour of the hair in the background is very common with Vandyke: a striking example is in the picture of Killigrew and Carew at Windsor Castle.

Having proceeded thus far with general observations, I will now enter into a practical investigation of the principles of portrait painting, commencing with the features in detail. The peculiarities of the mouth should be noticed in the first instance—not that it is of more importance than the eye, but because from infancy to age it undergoes greater change than any other feature. In children, we perceive the mouth admirably adapted for the purposes of suction, from its rotund shape, from the hollow in the centre of the under-lip to receive the nipple, and the depending peak of the upper one, to lay hold and press out the nourishing fluid. The indications and influences of these peculiarities often remain for a long time indelible. The production of the teeth, and the alteration of the muscles of suction to those of mastication, produce an elongation of the mouth;² and in the adult, when the enlargement of the facial bones requires a fresh set of teeth, this elongation is still further extended, until we perceive the feature assume the form which the Greeks designated as Cupid's bow. The change from infancy until old age is a gradual alteration from full curved lines to dry straight ones; nor should we omit to mention the change which occurs in the colour of the lips: in infancy, the ruddy wet character of a child's mouth, after taking its food, is very characteristic and beautiful; so, likewise, is the roseate hue of a young female, where we see combined the health and innocence of childhood. If this impression could be carried forward, we should naturally expect the same treatment to be continued to maturity, and even to old age; but a higher quality takes precedence—viz. the quality





of the mind: Guido, Vandyke, and Reynolds, represent the female mouth as indicative of beauty, by delicate and refined colour; while Romney and Lawrence, by loading the lips with strong colour, though giving their portraits the character of robust health, have removed the impression of delicate sensibility. It has been urged against this delicacy of colour, that, in removing the impression of common nature, it engenders one of imperfect health. In many of the female portraits of Vandyke, the mouth seems pronounced with a greater degree of strength than we should expect from his general practice, but this perhaps arises from his using Indian red, which, from its being an oxide of iron, is in a manner indestructible, while the surrounding half tints have faded. On the other hand, Reynolds, in his use of lakes in finishing the mouth, appears now more delicate, from the colour having fled—independent of which, Reynolds frequently opened slightly the female mouth, and also the mouths of his children, which enabled him, by the introduction of dark, to give a softness of character to the feature, without destroying its bulk. The outer corners of the mouth are points of the utmost importance, and ought to receive the greatest attention. In the antique, we find the Greek sculptors marked the termination full and soft, which, compared with the Egyptian, gives a much higher character.

The harmonious proportion of the different features, so necessary to the existence of beauty, is early developed; and in children that agreement of form is strikingly observable. Next to the mouth, and of equal importance, is the eye. This organ is slower in changing its appearance, and changes less than the other features; hence the eyes of children seem large in proportion. The greatest alteration which takes place from childhood to youth is in the inner corner, or canthus of the eye; and the greatest change observable from youth to old age is in the outer corner, over which the constant movement between the muscles of the upper and lower portion of the face are in action; hence the production of wrinkles and deep markings. In Greek sculpture, this organ is seldom, if ever, perforated at the pupil, as

was the custom of the Roman sculptors, which gradually gave place to the introduction of jewels in more barbarous times; hence the expression of beauty in Greek heads is to be found in the mouth, represented generally a little open, and deeply chiseled. This circumstance has led their poets to notice the mouth more particularly.

Anacreon, in enumerating the gifts of Nature, says, "To the bull she gave the twisted horn; to man, the thinking mind; and to woman, persuasion more powerful than either—'the word that hovers on the parted lips.' " In representing the beauty of the female eye, no one has excelled Sir Thomas Lawrence: the delicate varieties of the outline, the lustrous brilliancy of the high light brought in contact with the dark pupil, and the thin thread of the watery fluid trembling within the under eyelid, unite the most elegant arrangement of form and chiaroscuro with the most minute finish; if there is a fault, it is that the other features are robbed of their importance, and that the eye itself does not keep its situation within the orbit.

While writing this part of the investigation, being anxious to know how the eyes could be kept in their situation in the orbits without strong shadows under the eyebrows, I examined several celebrated pictures by Rubens, Vandyke, and others, and found many possessed the same defect that exists in those of Lawrence. One by Reynolds, a portrait of Nelly O'Brien, seemed to have overcome this difficulty, by the eyes swimming in a medium of delicate shadow. By this treatment, Sir Joshua did not obliterate the peculiar quality of the youthful character of the eye, but kept it in its place by the breadth of the surrounding shadow. The whole of the shadows and half tints are of the most tender character; but the work is prevented from being insipid and feeble by the cutting lines of the figure against the dark landscape background. Compared with Lawrence, Reynolds has no pretensions to detail; his broad washes define everything, but the artistic quality of his work leads his portraits into the highest grade of pictorial representation. This delicate treatment of the countenance, with the strong defined shadows of the background, seems to



justify Reynolds's remark, in his lectures, "that he was no enemy to dark backgrounds." I remember a portrait of a lady, by Phillips, seated out of doors, with the light coming through on the countenance interrupted by means of a white parasol; it had precisely this effect. But the strongest proof of the influence of delicate shadow in refining the asperities of Nature, was in a portrait of old Sir Isaac Heard, of the Herald's College, by Devis. While talking of the harsh lines often observable in the countenances of old people, he drew the muslin curtain across the painting-room window, which in an instant produced the most delicious grey and pearly tones over the shadows, and removed the whole appearance from common nature to the most finished work of art.

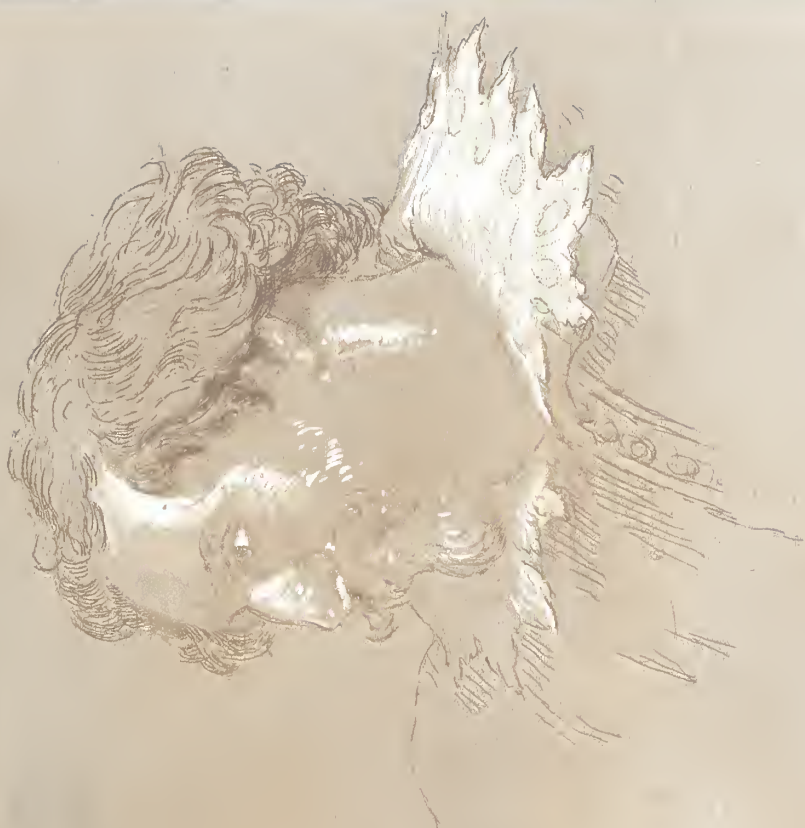
As these remarks are more applicable to the female eye and to the eyes of children, I shall now enter into a critical investigation of this feature in a broader and more general character; and will commence with the mode in which Titian has treated it. In the portraits of this great master we find every portion of the countenance laid out with reference to its grandeur, and greatest breadth and dignity. For example: the pupil merges in the outer line of the iris, thus giving its greatest bulk, while the upper and lower eyelids are extended by shadows to the eyebrow, the darks of which are carried out by a union and dependence with the adjoining hair; thus making the extreme boundary of every feature its definition. Nor do the minute portions of detail interfere with this extension, every part of the work being made subservient to grandeur and breadth of shadow.

In examining the detail of the various portions of the eye, we find the necessity of resolving every minute division into one general broad principle; for example, take the upper eyelid, we find it composed of a certain thickness of muscle, through which the light partially shining, will give it a warm colour even in its shadow. We find its inner boundary defined by its shadow on the eye itself, while its outer edge is strongly marked by the eyelash; yet these in combination make but one mass, when viewed at the distance necessary for a portrait to be taken. Even the light shining on the eye, and

partially illuminating the iris, is made subservient to the whole feature, and each feature so modified as to produce a harmony in its union with the entire countenance. It may be said the eye is that which attracts our attention in the first instance when we are introduced into the presence of any one; but the expression of the whole countenance requires a due subordination to be given in individual parts. This is one reason why a painter varies the position of his sitter until he fixes upon that view most conducive to the likeness and general character. What I have mentioned respecting the enriching and carrying out the beauty of the eye by means of the hair and its shadows, both in harmonizing with the eyebrow, and giving force to the cheekbone, will be found beautifully exemplified in the portraits of Vandyke, particularly in those small works painted *con amore*, of which there are engravings. I would also refer the student to Vandyke's treatment of the nose, so necessary not only to the likeness, but as a characteristic feature of the human countenance.

In drawing and marking the nostrils and point of the nose, so as to keep them in union with the profile of the upper lip, Vandyke's manner is not only peculiarly his own, but superior for taste and elegance to the manner of all other painters. In this part of the countenance, and also in the painting of the receding parts, from the bridge to the inner canthus of the eye, he is often nearly approached by Sir Peter Lely, who seems to have studied him with great assiduity. I would particularly mention Lely's portrait of the Countess of Grammont, at Hampton Court Palace, as the most successful imitation he has left of Vandyke's manner.

I shall now make a few observations on the ear, which, though not an intellectual feature, is yet an organ of great beauty, both on account of its elegant assemblage of lines, and those convolutions, contrasting, yet combining with each other, in an arrangement so congenial to our notions of grace. The ears of children are rounder, and less marked by the hard cartilaginous portions forming the inner boundaries, and evidently intended for the greater protection of the organ, but which, to an artist, fall in with





his notions of perfection, from their possessing a proper proportion of hard and soft marking; and in this feature also, no one has surpassed Vandyke. In his female portraits, the fashion of wearing the hair has prevented our seeing the ear represented fully developed; but what is perceivable is small and more circular than in his portraits of men. In the portraits of Velasquez, we see the ear carefully drawn and painted with precision, when the light falls on that side of the head; whereas, when the ear is seen on the shadow side, Velasquez treats it in a very subordinate manner, both to assist the receding part of the head, by its melting in with the shadow, and also to prevent it interfering with the more indispensable features of the face; and this treatment of the several features ought to lead us into an inquiry, how far every part of the countenance is entitled to an equal degree of finish: from Giovanni Bellini to Holbein, we perceive the features immovable, as if cast in bronze; but Rubens and Vandyke have taught us that life and motion are given by a mixture of hard and soft outlines, a dexterity and looseness of handling, a certain degree of extreme finish, with a portion of repose and indistinctness; and if this reasoning is right, the leading points only ought to be elaborated—and those portions which are of less importance, by being kept subservient, will be rendered, by such treatment, conducive to the completion and perfection of the whole.

Having now gone through the features of the face in detail, I shall enter into an examination of the whole, when combined both in the antique statues and in the life. By the study of the antique, in the first instance, we acquire a more perfect knowledge of form, indicative of beauty and correct discrimination of character. The want of this previous study is perceptible in the early German and Flemish schools; and the adoption of it has stamped a grandeur and dignity on the works of the great masters of the Italian schools. Fuseli, in his *Lecture on Design*, asks—“Why has the Academy decreed that the student, before he be permitted to study life, should devote a certain period to the study of the antique? If you fancy the motive lay in the comparative facility of drawing from a motionless

object, you lend your own misconception to the Academy; for though, in general, it be undoubtedly more easy to draw an immovable object than one that, however imperceptibly, is in perpetual motion, and always varies its points of sight, it cannot be the case when applied to the antique; for where is the great name among the moderns that ever could reach the line and the proportions of the ancients? What was it that the Academy intended by making the antique the basis of your studies?—what, but to lead you in the true elements of human essence; to enable you to judge of the transition from the marble to life—what was substance and possession in the individual, and what excrescence and want—what homogeneous—what discordant—what deformity—what beauty.”

The perfection of form and completeness of character in the personification of the human species observable in the Greek sculpture have arisen from the contemplation of the most beautiful models of the race, and by a combination of such examples of the most perfect kind; but though symmetrical and uniform in the leading principles, their statues are, nevertheless, varied in the highest degree, from the fighting gladiator to the celestial Venus, each figure being perfect in its kind, from its possessing the various attributes of strength, swiftness, courage, timidity, or beauty, and these drawn from a close observance of nature. In all their varieties their figures seldom change from seven heads to seven and a-half in their height, nor does the countenance ever, under the greatest expression, vary much from their general standard—viz., dividing the face into three portions, the forehead occupying one, the nose another, and the space between the nose and chin the third; which last is divided into three, one from the nose to the mouth, and two from the mouth to the chin; the space between the eyes is the breadth of one eye; and the mouth ranges in extent to the pupil of each eye, except in children and youth, which, on account of the smallness of the mouth and largeness of the eyes, is considerably less; the nose generally forms a continuation of the forehead, which has the effect of sinking the eyes deeper in the orbit. All these peculiarities have the property of removing the human

countenance from the approach of any resemblance to the brute creation; and the refined taste of the Greeks, strengthened by their philosophic learning, enabled them to place their principles of design on the surest and most permanent basis.

In entering upon a course of study from the antique, it is of the utmost importance that the drawings be made at least as large as the original cast, which will prevent the student from falling into a little style of delineating form; and perhaps, in the first instance, he ought to confine himself to the mere outline, that his eye may acquire a correct knowledge of form. When this preliminary course has been gone through, his studies ought to be made on tinted paper, sufficiently dark to permit white chalk to define the lights; for by using white and black chalk, he will arrive at a readier mode of giving the light and shade, than by using black chalk only upon white paper; and ultimately copy the model in oil colour, using only black and white, with a little Naples yellow for the reflected lights. This method of continuing his studies will enable him to acquire a gradual mastery over the use of his palette and brushes, which are to be the means of carrying out his future works.

When the student forsakes drawing from the antique, and turns to painting from the life, or changes the portcrayon for the pencil, the stride is too great from the one to the other. Having casts from the antique heads in your room, will familiarise the eye of the student to a knowledge of beautiful form, as we imperceptibly imbibe a taste for anything continually present.

In passing from the study of the antique head to painting from the living model, some writers have recommended a deviation, that the imperfections of Nature may be corrected. This is a dangerous course of study; for however this is to be practised in future works, the early studies ought to be correct imitations of what is presented to the eye. The anxiety that many young students betray, in getting from the antique to painting from the life, has been censured by some as detrimental to their

future career as artists. In portrait-painting, as colour is the true attractive quality, the palette can scarcely be too early on the thumb; the student who is not early accustomed to the palette may be an excellent draftsman, but not a painter.

Next in importance to the study of the antique statues is studying the works of the great painters of portraiture, that we may gain an insight into their mode of treating their subject in the arrangement of form, light and shade, and colour. As often, therefore, as possible, make sketches of their pictures. The noble dignity and unaffected simplicity of Titian's portraits arise in some measure from the superior character of the people he painted, in look and costume fitted for the highest walks of historical art. The rich, deep tone of the flesh, the intensity of black in the hair and beard, seem to engender of themselves a superiority of style. And when I mention the defects of form in Rembrandt, it applies more particularly to his models—for in truth and richness of tone he yields the palm to no one. Had he practised painting Venetian noblemen in place of Dutch burgomasters, the air of the heads, and attitude of his figures, would of necessity have been different. This is one reason that has placed the portraits of Titian as the highest models for imitation and study. No words can give much idea of this superiority. It may be said that many of the heads of Raffaele have the same intensity of look; but they lose the fascinating appearance of reality observable in Titian's works. The rich glazings and truth in his colour contribute to this in a high degree; for although the shadows of the head are often dark, they are of the exact tone of flesh under such circumstances; and from the depth and power of his backgrounds are rendered comparatively luminous. Much of this reality and look of nature is observable in the portraits of Velasquez; also in Vandyke's Italian pictures. The complexion of his English sitters compelled him, in his later works, to adopt a lighter style of colouring.

Northcote, in his *Conversations with Hazlitt*,³ remarks, that the portraits by Titian look like the people themselves; those by Vandyke look like

pictures painted from the life; the portraits by Reynolds look like the reflections of the persons in a glass; and that on examining a picture by Sir Joshua, he has sometimes looked round to see whether the person was behind him. This is a fine turned sentence, but of little use to the student. In the portraits of Titian, the head and figure are often in the same direction, which gives an unaffected simplicity and a superiority, as if above the common method of courting attitude and picturesque effect. In Vandyke's portraits we frequently perceive an exaggeration of motion, and too great action displayed in the attitude. This it is, perhaps, which gives them the appearance of pictures, from the taste and arrangement displayed in the whole work—the perfection of the art being the art of hiding the means by which it is accomplished. Richardson remarks, that the portraits of Vandyke always look like high-bred people, and have the air of persons of refined manners. Sir Joshua has the same look in his portraits of ladies and gentlemen, and has infused into their attitudes and expression the character of unaffected ease and natural grace. Much of this peculiarity he acquired from his study of the actions of children, of whose habits he was a constant observer.

I cannot refrain from bringing the style of portraiture pursued by Velasquez into this comparison; it is evidently formed upon that of Titian, large in form, rich in glazings, and well impasted in laying on the colours; but it is more frank, and done with greater facility. I speak more particularly with reference to the earlier pictures of Titian, for the later works of most artists are like the history of the art itself, less hard, and rendered with more vivacity. The change from Leonardo da Vinci to Titian was great; but the rapid and dextrous movements of Rubens' pencil rendered everything apparently fixed and stationary that had preceded him. Rubens must have been but a short time in Madrid before Velasquez became sensible of this, and engrafted the easy flow of Rubens' handling upon the intense depth and rich colouring of Titian. This is very perceptible in two portraits of his in the collection of the Duke of Wellington; and I re-

member when, some years ago, they were exhibited in the British Institution, I expressed my belief that they were each painted at one sitting, previous to glazing; but Sir Thomas Lawrence, who was examining them with me, very properly observed that, under that appearance of off-hand dexterity, was the ground-work of the most careful study. Since this part was in the press, I have looked at them carefully in Apsley House, and find I was mistaken, for though they exhibit all the freshness and undisturbed frankness of a first sitting, they are full of varied tint—particularly the portrait of the Pope—and well impasted with colour, especially in the lights. The glazings are less warm than Titian, whose colours exhibit the appearance of flesh seen under the influence of sunshine, or candlelight. As these two heads are perhaps the finest examples of the style of Velasquez at present in England, I hope another opportunity will be given of examining them on the walls of the British Institution.

In comparing the portraits of Raeburn with those of Velasquez, there are many points of agreement, particularly in the broad massive manner of laying out the head, and a certain squareness in the handling; and it is observable, though both give a firmness to the forehead by introducing dark shadows under the eyebrow, such shadows rarely reach to the under eyelid, but passing soft over the eye, enable the high lights to tell without disturbing the agreeable expression of the light under the eyelid. This practice also prevents the nose from appearing too short, and removes all reference to the mere skeleton which a full shadow in the orbit produces. The arrangement of the height of the painting-room window also gives a greater distinction between the darkness of the upper and under lip, such as we see in the antique statues. This treatment of the chiaroscuro, leaving it undisturbed by the application of local colour, is frequently a source of strong expression, and ennobles the features by giving a greater breadth of tone. In Lawrence's portraits, and even in those of Vandyke, we often find the overcharging of the under lip with colour counteracts this characteristic.

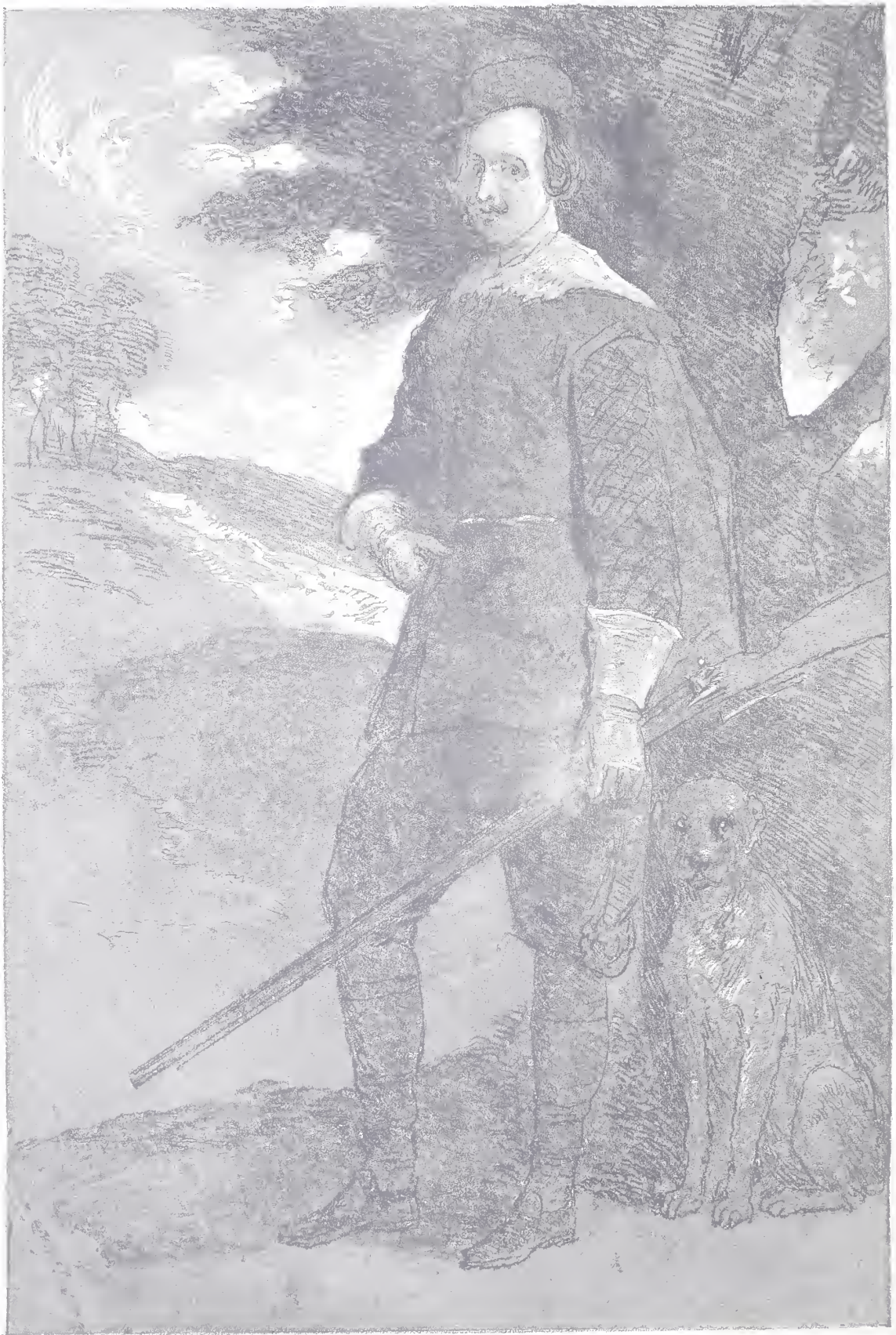
In preparing a work to receive every advantage in its finished state, it is necessary that the brush marks, or edges of the colour used in the earlier stages, should be softened and rendered smooth, either by a softener or flat brush, otherwise they will interfere with finishing reserved for the last sitting. The tints likewise ought to be less perfect, that they may depend upon their perfection to the glazings and vivid handling of the last touches.

Most artists have used a greater degree of neutral tint in commencing the head, which not only prevents the colours looking too hot and foxy in the last stage, but conduces to greater transparency and the luminous character of flesh; they ought also to be lighter, and used with little vehicle, that by their opacity and substance the light falling on the picture may be reflected back through the transparent finishing tints. Colours of a uniform hue painted over similar colours underneath, render the work heavy, and destitute of that variety of tone observable in nature. Hot and cold tones in alternate stages of work produce this quality; but after a time shining through each other, give a refinement of finish unattainable by any other process. These tints ought to be mixed up on the palette before the sitter comes, not only to save time, but to prevent the artist's attention from being obstructed. For the light tints, use flake white, Naples yellow, vermilion, and ultramarine of various strength, and of different degrees of warmth. The dark tints ought to be mixed up and ready for the shadow side of the head, such as umber or Cologne earth, Indian red and ultramarine reduced or strengthened by the addition of black or white. When these are all arranged, very little of positive colour, either hot or cold, will temper and adjust them to the complexion of the sitter; in fact, it now becomes a species of working with coloured crayons. When the dark shadows are reduced in the finished work by lighter tints, it is a species of scumbling which has often a beautiful effect, as it takes the brilliancy and luminous property out of them; and when the light portion of the face is enriched by warmer transparent tints, it gives that appearance as if the light was pass-

ing through the skin. Titian is marvellous in the process which gives to flesh the exact look of nature.

Reynolds often commenced his heads with a little warm colour, and reserved the hues of the life to the last sitting. Lawrence generally brought up his portraits by repeated touchings of more delicate colour; one depended upon glazing, the other never glazed. What is generally understood by glazing? In many of Reynolds's pictures the glazings have fled, leaving the preparatory ground too apparent; in many of Lawrence's, from his want of protecting his colours from the action of the air, by a rich juicy vehicle, he has produced a husky, leaden, opaque appearance. In the portraits of Vandyke, we perceive the excellence of both methods combined, a perfect mixture of hot and cold colours, and the utmost harmony and truth from the exact medium of sharp and soft handling. In a portrait now in the possession of Lord Colborne, and formerly in the studios of both Reynolds and Lawrence, and highly estimated by each of those artists, we gain an insight into the mode adopted by this celebrated man. From its evidently being a first sitting or study, the whole mask is laid in with warm dull flesh tint, without the high lights being put in, either in the eye or on the other features; the dark broad markings on the eyebrow, mouth, and shadow under the ear, are put in with the same colour as the hair, which is of dull brown, such as Cologne earth; the nostril is very delicately marked, as are also the convolutions of the ear, which is most perfect in form and truth of marking: it is a profile view of the head, with the light falling full on the cheek.

Comparing the portraits of Velasquez with those of Vandyke, we perceive the former founded his style upon those of Titian, of whose works he was a great admirer, purchasing many for the Spanish emperor, when on his travels through Venice and Italy; while, with all his refinement and truth of nature, the school of Rubens seems to influence the portraits of Vandyke, both as regards arrangement and colour. The portraits by Velasquez have more the look of familiar life than those of Titian. Titian's portraits look at you,



but do not speak, which gives them a silent and often a severe dignity, producing awe in the beholder. Vandyke's portraits often do not look at you, but their action and animation give them a speaking character. It is more difficult to produce an appearance of reality in motion than in quiescence: the more you look upon the one, the deception is strengthened; the longer you gaze on the other, the illusion is lessened, as the lines conveying the idea of motion are found to be stationary. Critics get over this difficulty by saying Vandyke's figures look as if they had been moving, but have stopped, and will move again when you leave.

Giving a work the exact look of nature, unless combined with the scientific arrangements of refined art, may create wonder in the ignorant, but seldom gives satisfaction to persons of refined taste. It is mentioned of a portrait by Titian of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, that on its being placed on the terrace in the sun, (perhaps to dry some of the colours,) the passers by took off their bonnets, thinking it the Emperor himself. That forms but one part of its excellence; indeed, these stories are told of many artists, from the Greek painter who deceived a brother artist by painting a curtain, down to Rembrandt, who deceived a multitude by painting his servant-maid, and placing the picture in the window. This achievement is produced by the Daguerreotype, especially now that the head can be given the size of life; but it is not agreeable to look on. We are not deceived in this way by the portraits of Velasquez, or even of Titian, which owe their excellence to the skill with which they hide the appearance of studied arrangement. Vandyke, on the contrary, captivates us by the beauty of his composition and dexterous management of his colouring. In most works, especially whole-length portraits, artists fail from an anxiety to make them excellent by a combination of many qualities, which, though good in themselves, yet destroy each other from too great an assemblage. Breadth and simplicity are entirely lost sight of, like the painter who, failing to paint Beauty, made her gorgeous by the addition of jewellery and precious stones.

In this place I shall say a little respecting the background to a portrait,

as nothing is of greater importance both as regards the head and the whole picture. The reply which Rubens gave the person who recommended his son to him as a pupil—namely, that he was sufficiently advanced as to be able to paint his backgrounds, will never be forgotten—“If he can do that, my good friend, he stands in no need of my instruction;” so well did this great artist understand the difficulty of this department of the art, and how much all paintings depend upon it for this excellence—but none more so than portraiture. In the portraits of the early Italian and Flemish schools, the backgrounds form no connexion with the head, but are either of gold, green, or red, thus giving the figure the appearance of being inlaid. Even as late as the time of Raffaele, this mode of treatment is perceived. The next step was to break it up into form, but still with little union as to the tone of the head or figure. Giorgione, and finally Titian, carried this part of the work to perfection, not only in melting and losing portions of the figure in the ground, in spreading and repeating the flesh tints in the surrounding mass, but also in giving the flesh its true tint, by delicate mixtures of hot or cold colours, obtaining in this way, by contrast or harmony, richness, depth, and truth to the glazings on the head. No one has contributed more than Paul Veronese to this enriching of portraiture. His gorgeous assemblage of lines completely swallow up the dryness of the figures by their doubling and repeating the outline, extending and ennobling it by the background coming in contact with the figures, sometimes strong, sometimes delicate, in parts hot, and in other portions cold. His parallel lines and perpendicular, obtained either by means of pillars, flat walls, &c., give a variety and richness to the complicated treatment of the attitudes of his figures and their draperies.

Vandyke's works, though modestly and subduedly treated, are full of this quality, derived from a study of those of the great Venetians; and though Reynolds designates him as one in the list of ornamental painters, yet great geniuses, such as Rubens, Vandyke, and even Reynolds himself, know how to avail themselves of this gorgeous quality by modifying and

adapting it to the enriching of portrait painting. A study of the works of Paul Veronese gives us a complete insight into the art of conducting the background of a portrait, by which the celebrated painters of this department have acquired their celebrity. But what I wish to impress upon the student in this place is, not merely to be content with adopting a pillar and a curtain as the best means of contrasting the lines, and giving depth and variety in light, shade, and colour, but to inquire into the cause of such advantage, and to adapt it to his own purposes in his own way. It may be said that Velasquez, by making use of landscape, enriched his backgrounds often without the aid of either, but no one knew better how to make use of such forms by their lines—either *contrasting* the lines of his figures, or going along with them in harmony and extension; as, in writing, we often see the value of carrying on a sentence to its greatest extent, and then terminating it by a full stop.

But to revert to the advantage of adapting the back-ground to the head or figure:—We can easily perceive that, by bringing hot or cold colour in contact with the face, its tints can be modified to the exact tone of the life. This is one reason that many portrait-painters finish the head, not only before they have painted in the back-ground, but often before making up their minds what sort of arrangement to adopt. In finishing the head, they merely rub in a little blue, red, or yellow, as may best suit the complexion, at the time, and afterwards invent an arrangement that shall account for such colours being present in that place; and hence it is that the talent of the artist, so far as composition is called into request, is often exemplified. Confined half their lives to painting heads, or single figures—to the study of colour, or the identity of likeness—they are afraid to venture into the bold labyrinths of historical painting, and shrink at a back-ground that would not only swallow up the importance of the head, but render it less important, from its not being laid out, in the first instance, in such a style as to enable it to support such a combination.

And here it is of the utmost importance to draw the student's attention to what it is that constitutes grandeur—whether a largeness of parts, a continuity of outline, or a nobleness in the attitude. In the Italian school all these properties are to be found, which, along with the Greek marbles, ought to be an artist's constant study; even copying the attitudes out of the various historical pictures, and forming and adapting his ideas to accord with such transcripts, will be found of service. Also, it is useful, and even pardonable at times, to alter the view or composition of any figure, without being considered a plagiarist, turning the conception of the original painter to your own purposes. All great portrait-painters, from the time of Titian to Reynolds, have availed themselves of this privilege; the Saint Cecilia of Raffaele and that of Domenichino have both served as the groundwork for the portraits of feminine English beauty; and even the ideas of Michael Angelo have been pressed into the service. Reynolds has taken the composition of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse from the thought of Michael Angelo, exemplified in the Sybils of the Sistine Chapel; and General Tarleton, in the surprise during the American war, is represented tying the strap of his boot, similar to the figure in the Cartoon of Pisa, by Michael Angelo, where some soldiers, bathing in the Arno, are aroused by the blast of the trumpet on the approach of the enemy. Action, such as buttoning up a dress, or tying up the boots, are not, perhaps, dignified attitudes for portraiture, but they indicate the casualties of war, and take off the commonplace attitudes of figures represented as doing nothing.

Having drawn the student's attention to the back-ground and attitude of the figure, I will now advert to the treatment to be pursued in painting the dress—a matter of the highest importance; and this, in a great degree, must be regulated by the costume. If of a high or pictorial character, it may be finished minutely, and yet preserve an elevated character, such as we see in many of the portraits of Titian, especially those dressed in full suits of armour; but if of a common-place nature, it ought to be sacrificed without mercy. Reynolds struggled hard to extinguish the vulgarity of the blue

coats and red waistcoats, ostentatiously rendered by his master, Hudson; and Rembrandt often merely hinted at the colour or form of the dress; even in the portrait of the Burgomaster Six, his great patron, still in possession of the family, you may perceive that he is drawing on his glove, but that only when you look for it. Both Kneller and Lely mistook this treatment, and endeavoured to imitate the draperies of Vandyke, without preserving the subordination in which they were kept, never, in Vandyke's treatment, interfering with the dignity or beauty of the head.

Lawrence had still greater difficulties to contend with than Reynolds, consequently we see him exerting all his powers to enrich the scantiness of the dress; and here we see the necessity for drawing upon the background for all it can effect, by means of light and shade and colour. What I wish to impress on the student in this passage is this—that if the dress is pictorial, finish it; if not, render it subordinate to the head and general effect of the picture. If I were to mention the two extremes of the influence of costume in ennobling or deteriorating the dignity of the work, I would notice the equestrian portrait of Philip the Fourth, by Velasquez, and the portrait of Lord Ligonier, by Reynolds; in the Philip, everything is given with the force of truth, inasmuch as every part was excellent in the original. Reynolds, on the other hand, had to work up his materials into dignity and pictorial beauty by modifying every part of his subject.

In commencing a portrait, it is necessary that it should be either the size of the life, or sufficiently reduced as to leave no chance of ambiguity—half the size, and from that down to a miniature; but as littleness is a concomitant of beauty, the female head may be painted smaller than nature. Burke, in his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, argues in favour of this treatment; while the sublimity or grandeur of a subject is ennobled by its largeness. In many female portraits, from Vandyke to Lawrence, we perceive this principle carried out; at the same time, though by actual measurement the head may be less than the life, yet from the treatment of surrounding objects, and also from its appearing to be removed within the frame, it will

appear of the full size when viewed at a convenient distance. On the other hand, it is well to give the greatest extent to the features and mask of the male head, as an assistant to character and dignity. I have not met with a female head by Velasquez; but in those of Titian, Rubens, and Vandyke, we perceive a more delicate style of marking, and a gentler flow of outline, than in their portraits of men. The square markings from the pencil of Raeburn seldom accomplished the same excellence in his portraits of ladies which was so happily adapted to his male sitters. In the treatment of portraits of children Velasquez was particularly happy, giving even the dress and subordinate parts with force and truth quite startling. But in this department no one has exceeded the truth and character given by Reynolds—the unaffected playfulness of the features, the health and suppleness of appearance in the flesh, and the unsophisticated look of nature in the whole arrangement. In his treatment of female portraiture he is equally delicate, both in the form and colour.

The arrangement of a portrait, whether head-size, kit-cat, half-length, or whole-length, ought to be complete within itself, as Vandyke exemplifies in all his works. Great injury is often done to an artist's reputation by taking a portion only for the purpose of engraving. It has been remarked that the canvas on which many of the whole lengths of Vandyke are painted looks small compared with what is now in fashion; but it ought to be borne in mind, that Vandyke's pictures were painted for small rooms, and fitted to small spaces. The completeness here alluded to is one reason why such a figure cannot, with safety, be made part of a composition, where each part ought to depend on some other portion for the completion and harmony of the whole piece.

In placing the sitter, it is necessary to observe the head in different points of view, that the most striking and characteristic may be fixed upon, also in modifying the light and shade. In some instances the features are too powerful—in others, too weak; hence the necessity of having a clear knowledge of the best mode of treatment, only to be learnt by the study of the works



of those masters who have excelled in portraiture. In many instances painting a likeness is a very easy matter; but rendering the features under the influence of either a subdued character, or pictorial representation, is a work of the most difficult kind. An anecdote illustrative of this is told of Phillips, who, having Lord Thurlow for a sitter, (whose features and expression were of the most powerful kind,) kept changing the head in every direction, repeating the request that he would trouble his lordship to turn his face in this direction and in that; until Lord Thurlow's patience being worn out, he turned round and said, "I'll trouble you, Mr. Phillips, to trouble me as little as possible." These considerations made Reynolds paint Goldsmith in profile, and Lawrence represent Lord Brougham in front view.

Previous to commencing the portrait, we find that it was the custom of most of the artists to make a slight sketch of the air and attitude—generally little more than an outline on dull or blue paper, touched upon with white chalk. Velasquez, Vandyke, and Reynolds, have left several of these, from which we gain a knowledge of their practice; and Sir Joshua remarks, that the drawings of all great colourists are very slight, the brush, not the portcrayon, being their forte. With regard to the canvass or panel to be painted on, it is impossible to name the best, as all artists have been led away by their own taste. It may be safely noticed, however, that a light ground is preferable, as giving more brilliancy to the flesh tints; indeed, some artists give the canvass a coat of flake white where the face is to come, that the priming of the cloth, which is generally common white lead, may not shine through; others prefer a ground of a dull tint to make their first sitting, that the light and dark touches may tell with greater effect. Lawrence used frequently to use this tint; some have used an absorbent ground, that the oil used in the first painting might be absorbed, which produces great solidity and brilliancy when the work is finished; but to beginners this mode is very difficult to get the mastery of. Titian seems to have used various textures—sometimes merely fine linen, stretched without any preparation; at other periods very coarse Italian canvass; and some of his

pictures are painted on leather—such as the Loves of the Gods, at Blenheim. Generally speaking, all Vandyke's canvasses were common white lead preparations, which I would recommend to the student, who, when he becomes a proficient, can then amuse himself with his own experiments.

In placing the figure on the canvass, the heads of the whole-lengths of Titian, Paul Veronese, Velasquez, and Vandyke, are much nearer the top than those of the present day; much of this must, however, be regulated by the height of the original, as a figure looks taller from the head being placed near.

Another point I would draw the student's attention to here is, respecting the correctness of the perspective confined to the figure itself. Paul Veronese, and others of the Venetian school, first introduced low horizons—nearly as low as the feet of the figure, but did not, on that account, treat the countenance under the same influence, which would have rendered it foreshortened, as being much above the eye. A low horizontal line not only gives grandeur to the figure and whole design, it also flattens, by its perspective, the floor on which it is seen to stand, and prevents it from appearing to stand on tiptoe, as many of the earlier pictures seem to do, from a high horizontal line being adopted. Whole-lengths are seldom hung on the walls with the base of the frame lower than the eye of the spectator; of course, in small portraits hung below the eye, the treatment may be differently given.

As the hand is of so much importance in portraiture, both on account of its beauty, and also from its use in conveying action and expression, I will say something about it in this place. The Greeks, in establishing rules for the proportion of the human figure, seem to have watched and carefully examined the general law established by Nature;—comparing a multitude of examples, and where Nature was defective, assisting her, not only in the individual portions, but also in the harmonious arrangement of the whole figure. Hence the uniformity of their statues, only varying according to the several properties assigned to the different characters. I have mentioned



James O. Plummer

this in the treatment of the head by the Greeks. The hand of several of the monkey tribe, especially that of the chimpanzee of Borneo, is the nearest approach to the human hand; but, as Sir Charles Bell observes in his Bridgewater treatise, it differs in many particulars: "The most remarkable peculiarity in the chimpanzee, as distinguished from the hand of man, is the smallness of the thumb; it extends no further than to the root of the fingers. On the length, strength, free lateral motion, and perfect mobility of the thumb, depend the power of the human hand. Without the fleshy ball of the thumb the power of the fingers would avail but little; and, accordingly, the large ball formed by the muscles of the thumb is one of the distinguishing characters of the human hand, and especially in that of an expert workman."

The deviation the Greeks have strengthened and increased for a wider distinction between man and the inferior animals is the elongation of the thumb, extending to the first joint of the forefinger; the equal division of the length of the middle finger with the palm of the hand, measured from between the opening of the fingers and the fingers themselves; and as, in the brute creation, the fingers bend inwards to the palm to fit them for clinging to trees, &c., the early artists have made the points of the fingers, especially in the female hand, to bend slightly outwards, giving great flexibility and grace.

Michael Angelo, Raffaele, Correggio, and Parmegiano extended this variation from the Greek to the greatest degree without falling into caricature, which it afterwards assumed in the hands of Golzius and others. The graceful bending of the wrists, so great an assistant to beauty, was also extended to the extreme in the Italian school: this we also owe to the Greeks, as in the earlier Egyptian sculpture we find a continual delineation of straight lines. In female portraiture this graceful peculiarity is of the utmost value, and only appears absurd when joined to heads and characters unable to bear so high a style of art. Countenances possessing much of common nature are incapable of great elevation of character; but scientific

arrangement of light and shade, and truth of nature in the colour, will always render any position of the hand sufficiently pleasing and appropriate.

A writer on art has censured the hands in Vandyke's pictures as being too affected in attitude, and considers Reynolds to have overcome this without losing any of the grace and beauty so necessary to the female hand. Where Reynolds excels in the treatment of hands is in the natural look, both in the light and shade, and colour; also in the way in which he brings the dark touches and shadows of his draperies in contact, which not only gives brilliancy to the flesh tint, but serves to enrich the former by an assemblage of lines. This is a peculiar feature in Vandyke, from whom he must have acquired the arrangement; for, except in some of Vandyke's pictures, where evidently the hands have been painted by his assistants, no one has ever excelled this great master in the graceful drawing and delicate marking of the hand. His education as an historical painter, and his fine taste, seem to have enabled him to paint the hand in the most difficult positions, and, as I believe, to put it in without having a sitter before him.

The great difficulty a modern portrait painter has to contend with, is the scantiness of the drapery, and often the sleeve of the coat cutting off the completeness of the form. Not only the position of the hands in a portrait, as indicative of the action, is of the utmost importance, but likewise for the purpose of repeating the flesh tints of the head, and giving an arrangement to the various points of light. This alone gives a scientific and pictorial character to the work; but care ought to be taken, in attending to the distributions of the light points, that the hands are not so placed as to give the appearance of the arms being short—a defect that never can be made agreeable. In historical art this seems always to be avoided by the best masters, particularly by Raffaele. Bringing the hand in contact with the head, though difficult to perform with adroitness and taste, is not only conducive to the most surprising effects in enriching the features, but also in taking off their harshness, by making them a part of the composition. Reynolds has taught us this, by many examples—such as his John Hunter, Zachary

VARIOUS

Plat. XI



JOHN RUSSELL

Mudge, Sterne, &c.; and his female portraits, particularly those seen near in profile, are much enriched by it. I think our debt is greater to Reynolds for this mode of keeping the flesh tints more in a mass, than to any other painter. Rembrandt has done it, but more sparingly.

The equal proportion of light and bulk on each of the hands, which even in Titian looks formal, and wanting variety, has been tried to be avoided, by throwing one in shadow, or putting a glove on. This, of course, has been repeated so often, and by the best artists, that it only shows us how difficult it is to invent the natural means of making Nature subservient to pictorial composition, and an agreeable arrangement of light and shade. The dread of painting a portrait for the mere appearance of being painted, seems to have put the great masters upon calling in every shift to take off such a sterile and common-place character. The treatment of the hands in a portrait shows the invention of the painter perhaps more than any other part of the human figure; but where it has been felt and acted upon, from Raffaele to Reynolds, little new is left for the present painters. Let the student never fail to observe, that the action and expression of the hands may be too powerful for the repose of the whole, and draw the attention from the head—as may be exemplified in the energetic discourse of the French people.

I shall now return to the first sitting for a portrait. It seems to have been an axiom with all the great masters to place the sitter above the eye, as far as the countenance was concerned, without showing too much of the nostrils, or treating the lower portions of the figure under the same strict rule of perspective foreshortening; where it has been done, it seldom has an agreeable effect, and looks as if the figure had belonged to part of a ceiling. The throne in a portrait painter's room, on which the sitter's chair is placed, is seldom higher than two feet, and most painters stand at the easel, so that there is not much difference in the actual view of the face. Reynolds, who was a little person, is supposed to be the first who brought this practice into fashion; but it is not so. Vandyke was also a small person, and painted standing. Velasquez we know did, as he is represented

in the picture where the Emperor's children are in his painting-room. Titian, though of small stature, on the contrary, is said to have generally painted sitting, as we know by an anecdote told by Vasari; for while once painting the Emperor Charles the Fifth, a friend of his, a sculptor, stood behind his chair, and made a model of the Emperor at the same time. Lawrence and Raeburn, living in our own time, we know to have painted standing; but of course, all these artists, when they had to paint small pictures, used a sitting posture, for the better purpose of steadying the hand, and painting more minutely. I merely mention these matters that the student may see it must depend very much on the subject in hand, and adopt that which is most conducive to his success.

It has often been a point of consideration whether small pictures, and even miniatures, ought to be treated as if they were life size; I should have thought that the excellent works of Harlowe, in oil, and of Mr. Sanders and Mr. Thorburn, in miniature, afforded excellent examples of the same principles which guided Titian and Velasquez being perfectly available in conducting a work on ivory. The small treatment adopted by the Petitos, and others of that class, is gone by; but we must always except and admire the miniatures of Cooper, who was a kind of Vandyke on a reduced scale. The great beauty of a picture, whether it is the size of life or a small miniature, is its possessing breadth of light and shade, and breadth and simplicity of colour, and the unaffected truth of Nature. Without these qualities, the most dexterous handling is but giving currency to a specious falsehood.

Colour being the chief attraction in painting, especially in portraiture, the student ought to have this constantly in mind, even in the first sitting, and reserve the richness of the tones to a more advanced stage. The likeness, which may be produced without much colour, will be a sufficient difficulty to overcome in the first instance. Reynolds seems to have gradually worked up his pictures from dead coloured preparations, and to have reserved his glazings for the last sitting.

Wilkie, in a letter from Geneva to his friend Collins, says, "After seeing all the first pictures in France, Italy, and Germany, one must come to this conclusion—that *colour*, if not the first, is at least an essential quality in painting. No master has yet maintained his ground beyond his own time without it. But in oil painting it is richness and depth alone, that can do justice to the material. Upon this subject every prejudice with which I left home is, if anything, not only confirmed, but increased. What Sir Joshua wrote, and what our friend Sir George Beaumont so often supported, *was right*; and after seeing what I have seen, I am not now to be *talked* out of it. With us, you know, every young exhibitor with pink, white, and blue, thinks himself a colourist like Titian; than whom, perhaps, no painter is more misrepresented or misunderstood. I saw myself at Florence his famous Venus upon an easel. This picture, so often copied, and every copy a fresh mistake, is what I expected it to be, deep, yet brilliant; indescribable in its hues, yet simple beyond example in its execution and its colouring. Its flesh (O how our friends at home would stare!) is a simple, sober, mixed-up tint, and apparently like your skies, completed while wet. No scratchings, no hatchings, no scumblings, nor multiplicity of repetitions; no ultramarine, lakes or vermilions; not even a mark of a brush visible—all seemed melted in the fat and glowing mass, solid, yet transparent, giving the nearest approach to life that the painter's art has yet reached." Much of this breadth and richness of tone is enhanced by the figure lying upon white linen, and having a bunch of dark flowers in her hand. It must have been modelled and carefully defined in the preparation for this last general glazing, which gives it a luminous appearance. The student may see an example of this treatment of the flesh in a portrait by Vandyke, of his mistress, Margaret Lemon, at Hampton Court. The absence of white linen reduces the brilliancy, but the dark red drapery which she holds round her gives the flesh one broad uniform tone. The glazings are prevented from being heavy by deep dark touches in the folds of the dress, which, coming in contact with the hand, give it breadth and

lightness. This mode of treatment is very common in Vandyke's pictures, and successfully carried out in those of Reynolds, even when the draperies seem too light to warrant it. Much of this breadth and richness is derived from the contemplation of nature under the influence of candle-light, which swallows up the trifling minutiae of detail, giving a warm glow to the whole mass. Vandyke's Italian pictures possess this in a greater degree than many painted in England, arising, perhaps, from greater despatch being necessary. Barry says, many of them were painted at once; but those that I have examined, even the slightest, bear evident marks of repeated painting. It is related, that many of his sitters remained with him to dinner, and afterwards went into the painting-room. This practice must have given him a better insight into their character and expression. As the dinner hour, at that time, was one o'clock, he had an opportunity of comparing his sitter with a fresh eye; an advantage which Reynolds, though never losing sight of the character and expression, in preference to the cold imitation of the mere feature, was prevented from having, owing to the lateness of the hour of dining when he lived.

In tracing the progress of a work through the various stages, it is impossible to lay down absolute rules, for many circumstances may arise which will oblige the artist to alter his process; but it may be safely recommended gradually to strengthen the colours as the various sittings proceed, both by a general glaze over the whole, and, while wet, painting into it both with opaque and transparent tints, which will give it a higher refinement and solidity than any other process; still reserving the power of adding a general glaze at the finishing sitting, if his practice is to be founded upon such principles.

In a portrait of a lady in the possession of James Hall, Esq., evidently a second sitting, we perceive the progressive painting of Sir Thomas Lawrence. The face has received a general tint of the most delicate hue, while all the features are carefully painted in, leaving the hair untouched from the first outline, which is of a brown colour, such as black and burnt sienna,

with a few dark blots; these, however, whether arising from the shadow of the head or darks under the curls, are so contrived as to soften down and repeat the shadows of the features, and, by their arrangement, give a delicacy and beauty to the whole composition. This is often lost sight of, and, in finishing a head, the dark markings are obliterated and forgotten. In Reynolds we find this peculiarity preserved to the last; and whether in light or dark hair, they retain their predominance. Nothing gives greater beauty of composition and lightness of effect than this mode of treatment, combining, as it does, all the felicity of a sketch with the refinement of a finished work. What is happily done at first ought to be carefully preserved, if possible, to the last. I remember a practice G. S. Newton had (whose works yield to none of our own time for beauty of colour): many portions of his first painting, where he had been happy in the tone and colour, were left untouched to the last, only finishing round such parts with a tint of the exact hue. While I am upon this part of the subject, I wish to make a few remarks upon those small touches of dark so essential to the lightness of effect, and giving the appearance of vivacity and motion to the work; in fact, this is one of the great distinctions between early art and painting in an advanced state.

In advancing the several sittings towards the finish, care ought to be taken not to engender heaviness, which repeated painting often produces, and also darkness in the flesh-tints, arising from too much vehicle being used with the colour. This richness ought to be reserved to the finishing; and after a general glaze, the dark markings, and final touching upon the features with transparent colour only should be added. This seems to be uniformly the practice with Titian. And it is in the sitting before this that the life-like handling, such as we see in Velasquez, ought to be given, thus recovering the work to the free character of the first painting. The first painting embraces the laying out of the features, with their exact situation in reference to each other, and the pronouncing with firm colour the forehead, nose, and cheek-bones. A gradual increasing of the flesh-tints takes

place in modelling out the likeness, still without much vehicle, but with a mixture of warm tones and pearly greys, occasionally reconciling them to each other by means of a dry brush, giving them an enamel surface, without rendering the work woolly, which too much use of the softener produces. In the English portraits by Vandyke, very little, comparatively speaking, is left to this final glazing. Though there is a total absence of dryness and huskiness, the variety of tint is rendered into one general mass by the hands and flesh tints being surrounded with dark, or placed upon a black dress.

I am making these remarks with a picture of Vandyke's before me, the Duke of Richmond, formerly in the possession of Paul Methuen. And here I notice the repetition of the light colour of the hair, by means of a dog seated at his feet, on which one of his hands is resting. I may observe that there are four repetitions of this subject by Vandyke, with the variation of the dog being adorned in two of them with a collar of pearls, having earned this distinction from his having saved his master's life. These little incidents are always to be taken advantage of, as they all tend to give a historical character to the work. Many of Reynolds's portraits acquire interest from their embracing some incident connected with the person represented.

But to return to the treatment of the head. The last finishing ought to give the complexion and general look of the head when viewed a little way off; and this character will much depend upon the colour or depth of the back-ground, whether a red curtain, a blue sky, or a flat dark shadow. The light in most pictures goes diagonally across from the upper corner to the lower, not only as it gives the longest line, but as it is the best mode of dividing a work into the greatest breadth of a light and dark mass. This effect is often accomplished by the arrangement of hot or cold colour, as well as by the means of chiaroscuro alone. And when we consider the multiplicity of instances in which it has been adopted, it becomes almost hopeless to strike out anything new; still, in the endless resources nature offers, we often see a novel and beautiful adaptation of the principle. I



am here speaking of a whole-length, and also a half-length; my remarks are, of course, inapplicable to a single head, which requires all the space for repose alone.

Barry mentions, in his Lectures, that Vandyke often depends upon the variety of colours in his works for the light and shade. This, on examination, is very perceptible, especially in his groups of portraits. And here the student will find that the cold colours are arranged in masses and a variety of lesser shapes across the picture, while the warm colours take a contrary direction. This practice is common with the Venetian painters; but, in all probability, Vandyke had it from his master, whose whole works are filled with this mode of treatment.

Having mentioned the works of Paul Veronese as a mine from which portrait painters have collected their materials for the enrichment of portraiture, I may observe that many beautiful examples are to be found in his pictures justifying such arrangement. Towards completion of the likeness, it is of great advantage to place the picture and sitter together, removed to such a distance as will bring them both under examination at the same time, when the points of difference can be more easily detected by such comparison. Lawrence and Raeburn used to paint on the picture while so placed, and retire again to examine the effect. This mode secures the general look of the whole, and recovers that breadth which painting on the necessary detail often destroys.

We often learn much from the contemplation of bad pictures, by inquiring into the reason why they are so; and, consequently, avoid the same arrangement. One cause, amongst many, is the want of due subordination of the white drapery, to harmonize with the flesh tints. This has been gradually gaining ground from the time of Giorgione to that of Sir Thomas Lawrence. Reynolds seems the only painter who combated with it; so much did he strive against this want of union between the linen and the flesh, that it became a fashion for ladies to have their lace collars steeped in coffee grounds, to give them an antique look. But it is not only the

whiteness of the linen that is objectionable, but the total absence of light and shade upon it, and a careful avoidance of small shadows, which would give it some pretensions to a work of art. Independent of there being too large a mass, it is often cut into the most formal shape. In male portraits we frequently see the shirt cut out by the waistcoat, with all the formality of a white heraldic shield, thereby destroying, by its strength and brightness, the effect of the countenance. Lawrence and Hoppner were the most successful in defeating, by their skill, this obtrusive character, both by the reduction in size, and also by the irregularity in form. In female portraiture, the dress gives a greater scope to the taste of the artist, and brings the work more within the reach of pictorial arrangement. Giorgione and Titian, perhaps, were the first to harmonize the linen with the tones of the flesh. Correggio often has it very cold, for the purpose of repeating the cool tints of the sky. The Parma Holy Family is strikingly painted upon this principle; and I remember the first impression it made upon me was, that the picture was out of harmony, the glazings being rubbed off; but his several works show that this was his principle, referring his flesh-tints to the yellow draperies for harmony, these colours afterwards falling into red, with rich brown shadows. The Duke of Wellington's Correggio is a beautiful example of this. We perceive the Genoa pictures of Vandyke often have the linen not only cold, but the ruffs and wristbands dyed of a dark blue-black; this gives great brightness to the flesh, and must either have been the fashion at the time, or indicative of mourning. Mr. Holford has a portrait of a lady painted under this arrangement, the face and hands being the principal lights.

In a head-size portrait, if a hand is introduced, it seems to have the best effect when placed immediately under the head, which gives a firmness to the line of the figure. In treating of a half-length portrait, a greater space is, of necessity, given to the background compared with the head; this requires breaking up with forms whose lines shall counteract those of the figure, or giving a repetition of the colours in a subdued tone. Either in a

sitting or standing position one of the greatest difficulties seems to be the treatment of the legs; a shadow across is often necessary to keep the figure within the frame, and give a subsidiary character to the extremities, reserving the principal strength for the head and hands. With respect to whole-length portraits, greater variety, in light, and shade, and colour, is necessary; though many of Vandyke's are equally simple in the arrangement with his kit-cat and half-length sizes.

What further practical remarks I have to offer, I shall append to the several descriptions of the plates. I have confined my observations to the higher class of portraits, though it cannot be concealed that many works of merit (of which something might be said) have been rendered less valuable by the wishes of sitters being too much attended to.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

PLATE I.

THESE sketches are principally taken from Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose representations of childhood and youthful feminine beauty are surpassed by no one. The student will find an excellent specimen in the National Gallery, being studies from the head of the daughter of Lady Gordon. In tracing the alterations which take place from childhood to age, we perceive a gradual elongation, at the same time a greater approximation between the outer line of the upper and lower lip; the line between the upper lip and the nose also varies in a high degree, in childhood being of greater projection, in the adult more perpendicular, till in old age, from the loss of teeth, it presents a receding line from the nose to the mouth.

PLATE II.

In the antique statues and busts, the mouth is generally represented a little open and deep cut in, so that it becomes the principal feature in the countenance. The teeth are seldom represented, except in busts of fauns, satyrs, and inferior characters, giving thereby the look of common nature: with their divinities this principle was rigidly attended to. The male and female mouth often presents but little deviation, except in the marking of the moustache, and a greater firmness in the marking below the under lip.

PLATE III.

I have noticed elsewhere the breadth and extension of the lines of the eye and eyebrow, by means of communication with the hair, and giving strength to the outward boundaries of the adjacent forms. Now this arrangement does not detract from the importance of the eye, nor, indeed, any other of the features; but making them the principal of a larger composition, gives them a greater importance; and by breaking down by such conduct the isolated character and decided form of one feature compared with another, gives a greater harmony and beauty to the whole. Large blank spaces are not advantageous to any feature, and it has been contended that even in the celebrated portrait of Cardinal Bentivoglio, by Vandyke, the features lose their importance from the largeness and baldness of the skull. Another important advantage in bringing the hair in contact with the cheek-bone, is giving a greater firmness to this part of the countenance. The mouth and eye are certainly of the most importance in a portrait, as possessing a greater character of intellectuality; but, nevertheless, the beautiful convolutions and forms of the ear may be made, not only attractive, but a means, either in a profile or front view, of assisting very much the perspective appearance of the whole. In childhood it is softer and less cartilaginous than in adults, and also more circular in shape than in old age.

PLATES IV. & V.

These sketches are taken from the studies in the possession of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch. The originals are in burnt umber, or bone brown, and are evidently done at once; the ground, which is a wash of the same colour, being either wet, or, if dry, a wash of varnish, put on so that the handling both of the light and dark touches melt in, and are spread

and softened by a clean brush. The high lights in Vandyke's portraits are generally on the forehead, cheek bones, and above the upper lip; these points are often strengthened by the shadows of the features or darks of the hair coming in contact with them. The light mass and touches on the collar serve to throw the lower portion of the face into half tint, without having recourse to strong shadow, which would have the effect of cutting up the breadth of light on the head, considered as a whole.

The originals, both at Montague House, and at the Gallery at Munich, are from nine inches to a foot in height, and take in the hands. As engravings from them are not difficult to be had, the student in portraiture ought to collect them at every opportunity, as the best models on which to establish his principles.

PLATE VI.

These studies are from the original in Windsor Castle, painted by Vandyke, for the purpose of sending to Bernini the sculptor, and from which his bust was chiseled, afterwards destroyed at the fire in Whitehall. As we have here a portrait seen from different points of view, I wish to call the student to the marked character of the profile, traceable throughout, and never lost sight of in the heads by Vandyke; on this alone rest both the character and the resemblance, and therefore it ought to be always kept in mind, as in the progress of a portrait many points of likeness have been lost from this circumstance alone. It has been remarked, that the resemblance of no man has been handed down to posterity in a stronger light than the likeness of Charles I., Vandyke having caught even the anxious and thoughtful look, that, as Richardson remarks, "in a manner renders it historical, as he was then entering upon his troubles." This, in some measure, arises from the peculiar character of the countenance, which,

like that of Napoleon, Nelson, or Pitt, and several nearer our own time, differing from the generality, is therefore recognised at a glance.

PLATE VII.

The pictures by Velasquez are remarkable for their great simplicity, both in the attitudes and the treatment of the chiaroscuro; the lights are generally congregated at one portion, without interfering with the effect of the head. I have marked the high lights in this sketch strongly, that the student may perceive their situation, gradually descending to the base of the picture; the brilliancy of the head is enhanced by being placed against a cool sky. I have also marked the parts of the figure where the background comes in contact, the dress forming the principal mass of dark, without being cut out against the ground.

PLATE VIII.

The original from which this sketch is taken is in the Royal Museum of Madrid, and though of the size of life, the canvas only measures six feet ten inches in height; consequently the head of necessity comes near the top of the frame. In the present day, the situation of the head is generally regulated by the height of the sitter, since our canvasses are prepared of a larger size. The extreme light is brought in contact with the strongest dark on the shadow side of the figure, and is kept in check by the angular light behind the tree on the other side; here, as in the former sketch, we perceive the high lights form a complete arrangement in themselves, and are sparingly brought down to the lower part of the picture by a few small touches on the dog behind him. In several of the Genoa pictures, by Vandyke, we perceive the same powerful principle; also in many of Sir Joshua Reynolds'. Of course the introduction of the half lights and

extreme darks tends to harmonize these forms, but it is in laying out the ground plan in a scientific manner, and giving it all the force of the palette, that we can only give the firmness and simplicity of nature. The difference between good pictures and bad is the want of arrangement; consequently the artist is never sure where to give any portion the strength necessary, or to abstain. The original of this is the Cardinal Don Ferdinand of Austria. Plate VI. is from the picture of Philip IV., also in the Royal Museum.

PLATE IX.

The original is in the Royal Museum in Madrid—it represents the Infant Don Balthazar Carlos. A duplicate of this picture is in London, in the possession of Mr. Artaria; there is also a sketch in the collection at Dulwich. Velasquez, in his treatment of this subject, has brought the figure, whose dress is composed of yellow, pink, and black, glittering in light, up against a cool blue sky, which tint, gradually descending over the snow-covered mountains of the Sierra, subsides into the green and yellow tones of the middle distance, melting by degrees into the brown fore-ground; this, with the dun pony, making a mass of dark. Thus we perceive hot and cold colours combining with the light and shade of the picture—a practice common to Velasquez. We also see in this subject a favourite principle of this master, contrasting the direction of the lines of his background with the lines of the groups, thus producing a harmony and proper balance of the whole.

PLATE X.

This is the portrait of Charles I. in his robes, at Windsor, which Sir Joshua Reynolds notices, in a letter in *The Idler*, as being remarkable for the unaffected air of the figure. The dress is purple, which finds its

shadow in a dark brocade curtain behind, thus extending it by a breadth in the chiaroscuro. The light of the ermine finds its half tint in the sky; the outline of the base of the column, with the crown, &c., enriches by its form the off-side of the figure—a practice common to Vandyke. I may likewise notice the opening between the pillars, allowing the cool tints of the sky to come in contact with the head. This mode of giving brilliancy to the flesh is common to the Venetian painters, from whom both Rubens and his pupil adopted it.

PLATE XI.

In the body of the work, I have mentioned the difficulty of keeping style and grace free from the appearance of affectation; also, the difficulty of adapting the higher styles of the art to common portraiture. Reynolds seems to have been aware of this, and, except in the masses of light and shade, often made use of common forms in the outline of his hands. The general shapes and quantities observable in the best masters are always to be found in his portraits; also, the true colour of flesh; likewise, the extreme darks coming in contact with the high lights. In his portraits of the nobility, and fancy pictures or portraits painted under particular characters, we often find the application of the graceful forms of the antique, or those of the Italian school. In this plate I have given sketches of hands from the portraits of Titian, Correggio, and Vandyke, from which the student will perceive the great similarity of the mode of treatment adopted by these great masters of the Art; a greatness and gracefulness of style, and the manner in which the extreme darks come in contact with the lights of the flesh. From the Egyptian to the Greek we perceive a greater separation of the fingers from the palm of the hand, which was afterwards extended by the Italians on the restoration of painting. The expression of the hand is by this means increased, and also the power of introducing strong darks,

giving thereby brilliancy to the flesh tints, and solidity to the work taken as a whole. Meagreness or a dryness of outline in contact with the drapery seems to be got rid of from this mode of treatment.

PLATE XII.

The colour of this picture is a striking example of the simplicity of arrangement adopted by Vandyke. The dress is a dark blue, which is repeated and broke down by the sky. The picture is prevented from being cold by the dark curtain behind being of a warm colour, especially at the bottom, which warm colour is carried to the other side by a few roses of a faint red; the warm stone colour of the wall and vase crosses the figure by means of a scarf of the same hue, giving thereby a union of the figure with its ground. This is a very common practice with Vandyke, and serves at the same time, from its dull tone, to light up the face, and give brilliancy to the flesh tints. The original is at Petworth, where are also some of Vandyke's most celebrated portraits of the ladies of Charles I.'s court; but the student will also see some fine examples at Windsor.

N O T E S.

NOTE 1.

THE Greek statues were the principal sources from which the great artists founded their style, on the revival of painting in the fifteenth century. These great examples of beauty and chasteness of form are considered the chief resources to the present day. The accidental varieties and defects of the living model are corrected by a reference to their refined proportions and form. In commencing his studies by drawing from the antique, the student imperceptibly imbibes a correctness of eye, founded upon the most perfect principles of taste. Of course, it is necessary for the pupil to begin by copying drawings previous to attempting the more difficult study from the plaster casts; but I have found the latter is often too long delayed. Another mistake that beginners make, is finishing both the background and inferior portions with too great scrupulosity. In the advice I have here given I am borne out by the remarks of Michael Angelo, who, upon seeing a picture by Titian, praised the colouring highly, but observed it was a pity that the Venetian painters had not established their practice on a better style of design.

NOTE 2.

The note respecting the peculiar character of the mouth I have carried into the description of Plate I.; and I do not find that anything material can be added to the description of its characteristic feature given in the text.

NOTE 3.

Hazlitt, in his notes to Northcote's *Life of Titian*, says: "Titian in his portraits seems to have understood the principle of historical design better than any body. Every part tells, and has a bearing on the whole. There is no one who has such

simplicity and repose. No violence, no affectation, no attempt or forcing in effect—insomuch, that by the uninitiated he is often condemned as unmeaning and insipid. A turn of the eye, a compression of the lip decides the point. He just draws the face out of its most ordinary state, and gives it the direction he would have it to take; but then every part takes the same direction, and the effect of this united expression (which is absolutely momentary, and all but habitual) is wonderful. It is that which makes his portraits the most striking in the world. It may be compared to the effect of a number of small loadstones, that, by acting together, lift the greatest weights. Titian seized upon the lines of character in the most original and connected point of view. Thus, in his celebrated portrait of Hippolito de' Medici, there is a keen, sharpened expression, that strikes you like a blow from the spear which he holds in his hand. The look goes through you; yet it has no frown, no startling gesticulation, no affected penetration. It is quite simple, yet it almost withers you. The whole face, and every separate feature, is cast in the same acute or wedge-like form. The forehead is high and narrow, the eyebrows raised and coming to a point in the middle, the nose straight and peaked, the mouth contracted and drawn up at the corners, the chin acute, and the two sides of the face slanting to a point. The number of acute angles which the lines of the face form are, in fact, a net entangling the attention and subduing the will. The effect is felt at once, though it takes time and consideration to understand the cause. It is a face which you would beware of rousing into anger or hostility, as you would beware of setting in motion some complicated and dangerous machinery. The possessor of it, you may be sure, is no trifle. Such, indeed, was the character of the man. This is to paint true portrait and true history. So, if our artist painted a mild and thoughtful expression, all the lines of the face were softened and relaxed. If the mouth was going to speak, the whole face was going to speak. It was the same in colour. The gradations are infinite, and yet so blended as to be imperceptible. No two tints are the same, though they produce the greatest harmony and simplicity of tone, like flesh itself.”—*Plain Speaker*, vol. ii., p. 217.

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